



Bob Riley  
Governor

# Alabama Medicaid Agency

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P.O. Box 5624  
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e-mail: almedicaid@medicaid.state.al.us  
Telecommunication for the Deaf: 1-800-253-0799  
1-800-362-1504 (334) 242-5000



Mike Lewis  
Acting Commissioner

April, 2003

**There is a new law that protects you by keeping  
your medical information private.  
Read this notice to find out what you need to know!**

## Alabama Medicaid Agency NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES - Effective April 14, 2003

### FOR YOUR PROTECTION

**THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT  
YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET  
ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.**

**You do not need to do anything with this notice or call Medicaid unless you  
have a problem or concern about the law. This notice is being sent to you so  
you will know about this new law.**

### MEDICAID PROMISES TO KEEP YOUR INFORMATION PRIVATE

Your health information is personal. However, there are times when Medicaid must share information with others to help you get the health care you need. When this must be done, Medicaid promises to follow the law so that your information is kept private. This notice tells you how Medicaid uses and shares information about you and what your rights are under the law. It tells the rules Medicaid must follow when using or sharing your information.

### UNDERSTANDING THE TYPE OF INFORMATION THAT MAY BE SHARED

There are many good reasons for your information to be shared. If you apply for Medicaid through another agency (such as the Department of Human Resources or the Social Security Administration), that agency must send information about you to Medicaid. Information that may be sent to us includes your name, address, birth date, phone number, Social Security number, health insurance policies and health information. When your health care providers send claims to Medicaid for payment, the claims must include your diagnosis and the medical treatments you received. In order for Medicaid to pay for some medical treatments, your health care providers must also send extra medical information such as doctor's statements, x-rays, or lab test results.

### HOW MEDICAID USES AND SHARES HEALTH CARE INFORMATION

Medicaid contracts with others outside of the agency for some services. For example, Medicaid contracts with a company to process the claims sent in by your health care provider. Medicaid may need to share some or all of your information with that company so your health care bills can be paid. When this is done, Medicaid requires that company to follow the law and keep all of your information safe.

**Recipient Notice 03-01**

Here are the ways Medicaid uses and shares your health information. For each category, we will say what we mean and give an example.

**For Payment:** Medicaid may use and share information about you so that it can pay for your health services. For example, when you get a Medicaid service, your health care provider asks Medicaid to pay for that service by filing a claim. On the claim form, your provider must identify you and say what your diagnoses and treatments are.

**For Medical Treatment:** Medicaid may use or share information about you to make sure that you get needed medical treatment or services. For example, your Patient 1<sup>st</sup> doctor may receive information about you from Medicaid.

**To Run the Medicaid Program:** Medicaid may use or share information about you to run the Medicaid program. For example, Medicaid may contract with a company that looks at hospital records to check on the quality of care given to you and the outcome of your care.

**To Other Government Agencies Who Provide Benefits or Services To You:**

Medicaid may share information about you to other government agencies that are giving you benefits or services. For example, Medicaid may be asked to give the Alabama Department of Public Health information so you can qualify for benefits or services.

**To Keep You Informed:** Medicaid may use your information to send you materials to help you live a healthy life. For example, Medicaid may send you a brochure about an illness or condition you have or about your managed care choices.

**To Check On Health Care Providers:** Medicaid may share information about you to the government agencies that license and inspect medical facilities. An example is the Alabama Department of Public Health who inspects nursing homes.

**For Research:** Medicaid may share information about you for an approved research project. A review board must approve any research project and its rules to make sure your information is kept private.

**As Required by Law:** When requested, Medicaid will share information about you with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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## **YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION**

You have the following rights about the health information that Medicaid has about you:

- You have the right to see and get a copy of your health information with certain exceptions.
- You have the right to ask Medicaid to change health information that is incorrect or incomplete. Medicaid may deny your request in some cases.
- You have the right to ask what items and who Medicaid has shared your health information with after April 14, 2003.
- You have the right to ask that certain uses or disclosures of your health information be restricted. Medicaid is not legally required to agree with your request, but will agree if possible.
- You have the right to ask that Medicaid talk with you about your health in a way or at a place that will help you keep your health information private.

- You have the right to get a paper copy of this notice. You may ask Medicaid to give you another copy of this notice, or you may print a copy from Medicaid's web site, [www.medicaid.state.al.us](http://www.medicaid.state.al.us)
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## **MEDICAID'S REQUIREMENTS**

Medicaid is required by law to:

- Keep your information private
- Give you this notice that tells the rules Medicaid must follow when using or sharing your information with others.
- Follow the terms of this notice.
- Except for the reasons given in this notice, Medicaid may not use or share any information about you unless you agree in writing. You may take away your permission at any time, in writing, except for the information that Medicaid disclosed before you stopped your permission. If you cannot give your permission due to an emergency, Medicaid may release the information if it is in your best interest. Medicaid must notify you as soon as possible after releasing the information.

In the future, Medicaid may change its privacy practices and may apply those changes to all health information we have. Should Medicaid's privacy practices change, Medicaid will mail a new notice to you within 60 days. Medicaid will also post the new notice on its web site, [www.medicaid.state.al.us](http://www.medicaid.state.al.us)

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## **TO FIND OUT MORE**

If you have questions or would like to know more, you may call our Privacy Officer toll-free at 1-800-362-1504 or Telecommunication for the Deaf at 1-800-253-0799.

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## **TO REPORT A PROBLEM**

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may:

- File a complaint with Medicaid by calling the Office of General Counsel toll-free at 1-800-362-1504 or Telecommunication for the Deaf: 1-800-253-0799 or by writing to the Office of General Counsel, Alabama Medicaid Agency, P.O. Box 5624, Montgomery, AL 36103-5624.
- File a complaint with the Secretary of Health and Human Services by writing to Secretary of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, D.C. 20201. For additional information you may call toll-free 1-877-696-6775.
- File a grievance with the United States Office of Civil Rights by calling toll-free 1-866-OCR-PRIV (1-866-627-7748) or Telecommunication for the Deaf: 1-866-788-4989.

**We will not get back at you for filing a complaint or grievance.**

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## **REMEMBER:**

**You do not need to do anything with this notice or call Medicaid unless you have a problem or concern about the law. This notice is being sent to you so you will know about this new law.**

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**Por favor, llame por teléfono 1-800-362-1504 para esta información en español.**

# **IMPORTANT NOTICE**

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